

Message Text

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41

ACTION EUR-25

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SECAF

AMCONSUL MILAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1045

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, NATO, IT

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS ON AIRBORNE BATTALION PRESENCE IN
VICENZA

AS A RESULT OF RECENT NEW YORK TIMES REPORT, PICKED UP BY
OTHER ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS AND ITALIAN MEDIA, TO THE EFFECT
THAT US AIRBORNE BATTALION HAD BEEN STATIONED AT VICENZA IN ORDER
TO RESPOND TO MIDDLE EAST CONTINGENCIES, A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS
HAVE BEEN POSED IN THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT. FOREIGN MINISTRY
HAS INFORMED US THAT IT IS PLANNING TO USE SUBSTANTIALLY THE
FOLLOWING LANGUAGE, WHICH WAS DRAFTED BY THE EMBASSY, IN
REPLYING TO THESE QUESTIONS:

QUOTE THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOTED VARIOUS ACCOUNTS IN BOTH THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ITALIAN PRESS REGARDING THE STATIONING IN
NORTHERN ITALY OF A US AIRBORNE BATTALION. THESE ACCOUNTS
ALLEGED THAT THE UNIT IS STATIONED THERE FOR MIDDLE EAST CONTINGENCIES

THE GOVERNMENT WISHES TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE UNIT IN QUESTION
WAS DEPLOYED TO ITALY DURING THE PAST YEAR AS PART OF A ROUTINE
DISPOSITION OF NATO-COMMITTED FORCES. THE BATTALION FORMS
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PART OF NATO'S ALLIED MOBILE FORCE WHOSE MISSION IS TO RESPOND

TO CONTINGENCIES WITHIN THE NATO GEOGRAPHIC AREA. HENCE, SPECULATION
ON UTILIZATION OF THESE FORCES OUTSIDE THE NATO AREA IS UNFOUNDED.
END QUOTE. VOLPE

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